

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 251.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Veronica S. Rossman, of Colorado, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 251, Veronica S. Rossman, of Colorado, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Michael F. Bennet, John Hickenlooper, Christopher A. Coons, Cory A. Booker, Edward J. Markey, Elizabeth Warren, Alex Padilla, Richard Blumenthal, Mazie Hirono, Chris Van Hollen, Sheldon Whitehouse, Amy Klobuchar, Patrick J. Leahy, Debbie Stabenow, Martin Heinrich.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021—
Motion to Proceed

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 77, S. 2093.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 77, S. 2093, a bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, and implement other anti-corruption measures for the purpose of fortifying our democracy, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close the debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 77, S. 2093, a bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, and implement other anti-corruption measures for the purpose of fortifying our democracy, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Tim Kaine, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tina Smith, Richard J. Durbin, Jack Reed, Sherrod Brown, Jeff Merkley, Benjamin L. Cardin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan, Chris Van Hollen, Amy Klobuchar, Jacky Rosen, Richard Blumenthal, Elizabeth Warren.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, August 11, be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I know the hour is late, but we have nearly 30 highly qualified Foreign Affairs and Development nominees who are languishing on the Senate floor. We have to confirm these nominees to fully equip the United States to pursue our foreign policy objectives, and I will be asking unanimous consent to confirm each one.

My distinguished colleague from Connecticut, Senator MURPHY, a member of the committee, is here to join with me in this effort. I know the Presiding Officer is also a distinguished member of the committee.

In the nearly 30 years that I have been working on foreign policy, we have never faced such a confluence of global challenges: a once-in-a-century global pandemic; climate change threatening stability, health, and safety across the world; fueling displacement and resource-driven conflicts; great power competition from an increasingly emboldened China and Russia.

We have the tools to confront these challenges; to promote American values and interests around the world to advance the safety, health, and economic well-being of all Americans. But we cannot do that when we do not have empowered diplomats and development professionals in place to do so.

So I call on this body to confirm these nominees—all of whom the Foreign Relations Committee has moved

with bipartisan support—to put the United States in the best position to advance our foreign policy, development, and national security priorities.

I am calling for confirmation of all of these nominees: those up for Ambassadorships, senior State Department, and USAID positions. We need them in place.

Now, the Trump administration had its first Ambassador confirmed on day 62 of the Trump Presidency. The Obama administration had its first Ambassador confirmed at day 73. The George W. Bush administration had its first Ambassador confirmed at day 75. For the Clinton administration, it was day 75. For the George H. W. Bush administration, it was day 83.

We are now more than 200 days into the Biden administration, and as of this moment, there is not a single confirmed State Department country Ambassador—not one. And going back four administrations, there is a precedent of moving a package of nominees before the August recess.

Under George W. Bush, the Senate confirmed a package of 81 nominees. During the Obama administration, the Senate confirmed a package of 104 nominees. And during the Trump administration, we confirmed a package of 75 nominees.

We should be ashamed of holding the record for the longest delay in fully equipping the State Department and USAID to pursue the foreign policy, development, and national security interests of the United States.

Now, some Members of this body call on one hand for assertive American leadership on the global stage, and, at the same time, they hold up these critical positions. Many of these nominees are career diplomats, public servants who have dedicated their lives to advancing U.S. interests. They have served under the Trump administration in the same way they will serve in the Biden administration: on behalf of the American people.

Many of my colleagues are readily focused on effectively confronting Chinese malign influence. Well, a fundamentally critical element of confronting China is empowered leadership in our diplomatic corps, across the world. So let me be clear. Holding up diplomats to posts across Africa and the Western Hemisphere is effectively ceding influence to China and actively undermining U.S. national security interests.

I recently heard an anecdote from a diplomat in Cameroon. When he travels outside the capital city, Cameroonians will greet him with a “ni hao,” assuming that if he isn’t Cameroonian, he must be Chinese.

Meanwhile, we haven’t had an American Ambassador in Cameroon in more than a year, and the Foreign Relations Committee approved a career diplomat for the post by voice vote nearly a month ago. What could possibly be the rationale for holding him up?

Lastly, looking at the Department itself, critical leadership positions remain held up.

Now, I know many of my colleagues have dedicated a significant amount of their time over the past few years to combating the flow of fentanyl into the United States, but here we have a hold on a career Foreign Service officer nominated to be Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, who would be leading the Department's efforts to combat the flow of fentanyl.

So which one do you want? The American people deserve better than this.

Now, I know we are all tired of being here, and I want to salute and thank the different—the reading clerks, the Parliamentarian, the Democrat and Republican staff who are still here, but we feel compelled to go through and ask UC for each of these nominees. They all deserve to be confirmed tonight. So let me start off.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 233, Larry Edward Andre, Jr., of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Ambassador of the United States to Somalia; that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the Senator from New Jersey and, indeed, all of the Senators in this Chamber know precisely why these nominees have not moved forward, and the reason is because the Biden administration is currently engaged in open defiance of the U.S. Congress and is doing so in a way that is working serious and material harm to the United States national security.

Over a year ago, December of 2019, this Senate and, indeed, the full Congress passed legislation imposing strong sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. The Nord Stream 2 Pipeline is a pipeline between Russia and Germany designed to carry natural gas. It is a deep sea pipeline.

Vladimir Putin desperately wants this pipeline completed. If the pipeline is completed, it will give billions of dollars to Putin to use for malign efforts in Europe and throughout the world.

This Congress is overwhelmingly convinced that completing the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is terrible policy. It is bad for the United States; it is bad for Europe; and it is good for Russia and Putin. Accordingly, the Congress passed overwhelmingly bipartisan sanctions legislation that I authored, along with Democratic Senator JEANNE

SHAHEEN, and that legislation proved tremendously successful.

How successful was it? When the President signed it into law, if my memory serves correctly, at 7 p.m. on a Thursday, construction on the pipeline halted at 6:45 p.m. on that Thursday. Fifteen minutes before the sanctions went into law, they ceased building the pipeline. And for a year the pipeline lay dormant. It lay as a hunk of metal at the bottom of the ocean.

We had succeeded together. This body had won a bipartisan national security victory for the United States.

Then, in November of last year, Joe Biden was elected. When Joe Biden was elected, President Biden and his foreign policy team immediately began signaling weakness on Nord Stream 2 to Putin, and that signal was heard. Putin commenced preparatory efforts to begin building the pipeline again within days of the Presidential election in November. And Russia began building the pipeline again in January, just days after Joe Biden was sworn in.

Existing laws that this body has passed, not once but twice, mandate sanctions to stop the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. Unfortunately, the Biden administration decided to waive those sanctions. Waiving those sanctions, I believe, will prove to be a generational geopolitical mistake. If we continue on the current pace set out by President Biden, Putin will complete the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline.

If that happens, for decades, Putin and the next dictator in Russia and the next dictator in Russia will get billions of dollars every year from this pipeline. They will use it for military aggression. They will use it for spying on America. They will use it for attacking their enemies.

Not only that, Europe will be captive to Russian natural gas. It will be subject to energy blackmail. We don't have to hypothesize this because Putin has demonstrated his willingness to use energy blackmail on Europe going forward. This undermines the interests of Europe. It undermines the interests of America. And by the way, it also hurts jobs in the United States of America.

I have made clear to every State Department official, to every State Department nominee, that I would place holds on these nominees unless and until the Biden administration follows the law and stops this pipeline, imposes the sanctions.

As the Senator from New Jersey knows well—he and I worked together closely on these sanctions legislation that the Biden administration is refusing to follow—I have been negotiating with the Biden administration in good faith for a month, months, laying out a path to move these nominees forward. But unfortunately, to date, President Biden has insisted on giving a multibillion-dollar gift to Joe Biden benefiting Russia, hurting America, and hurting our national security interests.

That being said, there is a path where I would readily lift these holds,

and it is a path I am in a moment going to propound a unanimous consent resolution—a unanimous consent request to take up and pass legislation that I have introduced that would impose the sanctions that are already required by law that the Biden administration refuses to follow. This legislation is legislation that both of the Democratic members of the Foreign Relations Committee have voted for substantially similar legislation in the past.

If this legislation passes the Senate, if it passes the House and is signed by the President, the day it is signed by the President, I will lift these holds. But given that the President and the White House have indicated they intend to defy the law, I am not going to lift the holds unless and until they relent in their effort to give this gift to Vladimir Putin.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. President, accordingly, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of a bill at the desk that would require the imposition of sanctions with respect to Nord Stream 2. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). Is there objection?

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I will be brief for the sake of everybody here. There is a lot more to be said. But, look, first of all, this legislation was just introduced today—today.

It has not been brought before the committee. It has not had a full vetting. And it is not quite fair to say that it is exactly the same. It isn't. I was just looking through it.

Secondly, I know that the Senator believes that he can dictate to the President of the United States, duly elected by the American people, what the foreign policy should be. I believe we should have a role in foreign policy. I share that with the Senator. But you can't say: If it passes the Senate, if it passes the House, signed by the President, then I will release my hold.

I mean, I guess that would be nice if the Senator could accomplish it for his goals, but it is not the way the system ultimately works.

And I would just say President Trump, for the longest period of time, did not issue the sanctions that were necessary because he was so cozy with Vladimir Putin, and the result was that the pipeline was almost finished by the time President Biden came to office. And had he done what the Senator wishes, we wouldn't be in this position today.

So for all of those reasons, I object to the Senator's unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the request from the Senator from New Jersey?

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object, I will respond briefly to the Senator from New Jersey.

The talking point from the Biden administration as to why they have given this gift to Vladimir Putin is they say the pipeline is almost completed; that it is over 90 percent complete. The problem with that argument is it is demonstrably false because it was equally true in December of 2019. In December of 2019, the pipeline was over 90 percent complete. And, indeed, at that time, there was a massive Russian disinformation campaign throughout Europe, where the Russian Government was putting out: These sanctions will never pass, and if they pass, they will never work.

Why? Because the pipeline is over 90 percent complete. Well, a pipeline that is 90 percent complete is a pipeline that is zero percent complete. Until it is 100 percent complete, it transmits zero natural gas. The pipeline doesn't work until you finish it, and that Russian disinformation we discovered the day the sanction legislation was signed was exactly that, was utterly false, nonsense.

Why? Because the day it was signed they stopped construction, and they stopped it for a year. And Putin only began construction after Joe Biden was elected, after he was sworn into office, and after his team indicated weakness, that they wouldn't enforce the sanctions against Russia.

So their talking point that it was 90 percent complete, that was true a year ago. And we knew we could stop it then. We can stop it now. The only reason Putin is building this pipeline is because the Biden administration is unwilling to stand up to Russia. Accordingly, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, one thing that is demonstrably true is that Donald Trump did nothing as it relates toward this pipeline, and there wasn't much effort to try to get them to stop the pipeline at the time.

And while I disagreed with President Trump on a whole host of foreign policy issues, I did not hold up all his nominees just to get my view to be the order of the day.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. President, therefore, I ask that it be in order to make the same request that I made previously with respect to Executive Calendar No. 234, Elizabeth Moore Aubin, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Ambassador of the United States to Algeria.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object, I would note, as the Senator from New Jersey knows well, that I pressed President Trump vigorously on this topic, engaged aggressively with the Trump administration, with the Treas-

ury Department, with the State Department, with the National Security Council, and we prevailed in those battles. The Trump administration issued a series of sanctions, and they worked. They stopped the pipelines.

So I have demonstrated a perfect willingness to stand up to a President of my own party on this issue, and we succeeded in stopping the pipeline. Now, when there is a Democratic President, we have yet to see Democratic Members of this body willing to stand up as vigorously to their own party's President, who is actively and eagerly facilitating the building of this pipeline.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I would just simply say that the Senator from Texas did not hold up any of the nominees of President Trump as it relates to this.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 235, Maria E. Brewer, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Ambassador of the United States to the Kingdom of Lesotho.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because it is a generational geopolitical mistake to give a multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin to strengthen Russia and to undermine national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar, No. 236, Christopher John Lamora, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Ambassador of the United States to Cameroon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because it is a massive strategic error, one that weakens our allies, that endangers our allies, and makes Russia more dangerous, more aggressive, more willing to attack and undermine U.S. national security, and because Joe Biden and the Biden administration are defying U.S. law passed with overwhelming bipartisan support from Congress, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 237, Tulinabo S. Mushingi, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Ambassador of the United States to Angola and to serve concurrently as the Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because the Biden administration should not be giving a massive multibillion-dollar gift to Putin, strengthening Russia, and weakening America and U.S. national security interests, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 238, Eugene S. Young, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Congo.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object, because I think it is a generational mistake, one that will harm U.S. nationality security interests, will endanger U.S. service men and women, will weaken America, will weaken our allies, and will strengthen our enemies and our adversaries, because I believe that Joe Biden giving a massive multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin to make him stronger and more aggressive is enormously harmful to America, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 239, Michele Jeanne Sison, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because Joe Biden should not be giving a multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin, strengthening Russia, and undermining U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, here is one where it is a monumental mistake to not permit this person to be confirmed when we want to stop fentanyl from coming into our country.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 240, Todd D. Robinson, of New Jersey, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because Joe Biden

has made the decision to give a massive multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin, because that weakness toward Russia empowers our enemies, endangers our service men and women, weakens our national security, and destroys jobs here at home, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 241, Daniel J. Kritenbrink, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because Joe Biden should not be defying U.S. law, disregarding the overwhelming bipartisan consensus of both Houses of Congress, because Joe Biden should not be giving a massive multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin that constitutes unilateral surrender to Russia in a way that strengthens Russia, weakens America, and endangers our Nation, undermining U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 317, Marc Evans Knapper, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Ambassador of the United States to Vietnam; and that the Senator from Texas' remarks, which he has made repeatedly, be inserted each and every time after the motion that I have made.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I appreciate my friend from New Jersey's attempt to abbreviate this, and I am endeavoring to be concise but nonetheless lay out the factual predicate, because it was a mistake for Joe Biden to give a multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin, to disregard U.S. law, to weaken U.S. national security interests and to strengthen Russia at our expense, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, now is here one where we heard a lot even during the debate we just had about the United Nations and the need for reform. Well, here is an opportunity. I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 318, Christopher P. Lu, to be Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because Joe Biden is giving a multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin, in defiance of U.S. law, in contravention of the overwhelming bipartisan consensus of Congress, which hurts America, strengthens Russia, and endangers the people of this Nation, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 319, Christopher P. Lu, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving my right to object, because Joe Biden is giving a multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin, which weakens America's, strengthens Russia, and endangers our national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 320, Rufus Gifford, to be Chief of Protocol, with the rank of Ambassador.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because it is a generational geopolitical mistake for Joe Biden to give a multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin, because that mistake weakens America, strengthens Russia, and endangers our national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, now, here is a generational mistake if we do not confirm the next person. We are in the midst in Latin America and the Caribbean of turmoil all around. We have the challenges of Venezuela, the Cuban people crying out for change, the situation in Haiti after the assassination, Nicaragua becoming a new dictatorship. We need to have the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere be out there helping us in the hemisphere.

So I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 322, Brian A. Nichols, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I can't agree to move forward with this nominee today. I think this is really unfortunate. We could have avoided this. This could

have been avoided altogether if the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would simply disclose the responses to the questions for records to Members directly. Then Senators could review the nominees more quickly.

Unfortunately, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has refused to do that, and so I have been forced to go to the State Department to get this information. I received those responses on Monday evening.

Just a few hours ago, I sent some additional questions to the nominee. They would have been easy to respond to. I still await those responses, and I expect that I will receive them soon. But until then, I can't do my job right. My advice and consent role can't adequately be performed without having the information.

I am not going to relinquish that duty to represent the people of Utah on all matters and not just on those matters as to which I enjoy a seat on a committee.

There is one type of Constitutional amendment that is preemptively unconstitutional. All Senators are equal; you can't treat them unequally. I deserve to have access to these answers, and they are not giving them to me. That is why we are here. That is why I can't agree to this tonight, and I am not going to do that. I am not going to be bullied into it. They need to share this information. I therefore object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I don't get to serve on every committee, and I don't have the questions for the record of every committee hearing. Eventually, they get printed, and they are available to all Senators. But the suggestion that the Senator is being denied something when he is not a member of the committee is a unique one, to say the least. But nonetheless, I think there would have been another objection even if his interests were answered.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 323, Marcela Escobari, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—and I would note something to my friend from New Jersey, as the Senator from New Jersey knows—with respect to the previous nominee, I do not have a hold on the previous nominee. I have lifted my hold pursuant to discussions and negotiations. The same is true with respect to former Senator Ken Salazar, who has been nominated to be Ambassador to Mexico. My understanding is he is going to be confirmed momentarily. I don't have a hold, and I don't believe there are any other holds or blocks to his confirmation. So that will occur momentarily.

And, indeed, there have been several other nominees at the State Department where I have lifted the holds in negotiations, including at the request of the Senator from New Jersey. I have worked with my colleagues, but at the same time used the leverage that we have as Senators to try to pressure the Biden administration to follow the law and to defend U.S. national security interests.

With regard to this particular unanimous consent request, because Joe Biden is giving Vladimir Putin a multi-billion-dollar gift, which is a generational geopolitical mistake, because it strengthens Russia at the expense of America and it undermines U.S. national security interests, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 324, Monica P. Medina, to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because it is a generational geopolitical mistake for Joe Biden to give Vladimir Putin a multi-billion-dollar gift that will continue for decades into the future, because that mistake strengthens Russia at the expense of America and it undermines U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, before I yield, finally, to my colleague from Connecticut, a member of the committee, I just want to say that in 30 years of doing foreign policy between the House and the Senate, sitting on both the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committee, God forbid that something happens in one of these countries or in these regions where we do not have a confirmed Ambassador, Assistant Secretary of State, or Development Official to promote our interests, to respond to it, to be able to deal with it. I wouldn't want to be the Senator who held up that person when that happens at some point. I wouldn't want to be the Senator who held up that person when that happens at some point in the world.

I yield to the Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I am going to continue to propound these unanimous consent requests in the same form as the chairman of the Committee, but before I do, just a few brief remarks. I know the hour is late.

First of all, it is wonderful to hear this revisionist history about the Trump administration's disposition to-

wards Russia. Everybody knows what was going on. This was an administration that was practically sycophantish towards the Russian regime, refused over and over again to stand up in any meaningful way.

That is why the pipeline got so far along. It was the eleventh hour when the Trump administration, at the very last minute, decided to move forward on sanctions.

We are not here to paint the merits of the Trump administration's decisionmaking on Russia policy. But suffice it to say, Russia did very well expanding its influence around the region during the 4 years that Donald Trump was in office.

Second, the effects of holding up all of these nominees is to kneecap American national security. Never, ever before has a President had so few nominees confirmed to key national security posts than this President. It has never happened before.

It is true that there is a history in this body of individual Senators placing a temporary hold on one or maybe two officials relevant to the policy over which they are having a disagreement with the administration. Probably many Members of this body have done that. But at least in the time that I have been here and from what I have heard, never before has an individual Senator held up this many nominees for key national security posts over a disagreement on one specific policy.

And if every single Senator did that—because every Senator here has a policy disagreement that they believe is significant with the Secretary of State, with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, with the Secretary of Defense—then the business of nominations and confirmations would grind to an absolute halt in this body.

I had deep disagreements with President Trump, but never did I endeavor to hold up every single nominee to State Department posts, because I came to the conclusion that that would do much, much more harm to American national security than whatever concession I might get from the administration would provide a benefit to American national security.

So I share this just, really, paralyzing fear that Senator MENENDEZ expressed, that something awful is going to happen without the kind of personnel that every President needs on post to do the job. We could probably get by if this was a hold of one or two or three individuals. We are talking about dozens of key national security posts that are left vacant because of the decision of one Senator.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. President, I will continue to propound these requests. I imagine the decision will not be different.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request as those Senator MENENDEZ was making with respect to Executive Calendar No. 327, Anne A. Witkowsky, to be Assistant Secretary

of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object. The Senator of Texas spoke of revisionist history. Perhaps it was fitting that he did so because we proceeded to hear quite a bit of revisionist history.

The unfortunate reality is the Democratic Party in this Chamber has been reluctant to stand up to Russia and reluctant to stand up to the Soviet Union before that, for decades. The Democratic Party consistently has embraced weakness on Russia and the Soviet Union.

I am old enough to remember President Barack Obama in debate with Republican nominee MITT ROMNEY when MITT ROMNEY said we need to stand up to Russia. And President Obama stood up and said: MITT, the 1980s called and they want their foreign policy back because the Democratic Party position was weakness to Russia.

I am old enough to remember President Obama leaning over to Medvedev caught on a hot mic saying: Tell Vladimir—that would be Putin—I'll have more flexibility after the election.

It was only when Donald Trump was elected that the Democratic Party suddenly discovered Russia is a menace. I welcome that. I welcome that sudden discovery. I think Russia was a menace before and after.

But for too many Senate Democrats, it is purely political. Russia, Russia, Russia was a stick to beat up on Donald Trump and the substance of it didn't matter.

So the Senator from Connecticut said: Well, gosh, Donald Trump—he thinks—was terrible on Russia.

Here is a simple fact. Under President Trump, we stopped the pipeline the day this sanctions legislation was signed into law.

Under President Biden, Putin began building the pipeline again. Those are facts. You want to talk about who is weak on Russia? Those are simple facts, and those facts are dangerous.

Because Joe Biden giving a multi-billion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin was a generational geopolitical mistake because it strengthens Russia and it weakens America because it endangers U.S. national security interests, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Because American national security is gravely compromised by the inability of a President to have his national security team in place at a time of crisis, I would ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 328, Anne A. Witkowsky, to be Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object. Just a few moments ago, the Senator from Connecticut said something bad is going to happen. Let me tell you, he is right. Something bad is going to happen, and there is a reason for it.

The Biden foreign policy, in just 7 months, has been the most disastrous foreign policy we have seen of any administration since Jimmy Carter. To every enemy of America, they have projected weakness.

On Russia, Joe Biden has given Vladimir Putin what he wanted most: A multibillion-dollar pipeline to let him extort Europe.

On China, the Biden administration has been projecting weakness over and over and over again, including kowtowing to China and reversing the State Department policy on Taiwan, prohibiting Taiwan from displaying their flag or wearing military uniforms on U.S. Government property; kowtowing to the Communist Party of China.

On Iran, the Biden administration said their top foreign policy objective is sending billions of dollars to the Ayatollah Khomeini, even as he is the leading state-sponsor of terrorism to the world and chants, "Death to America."

And on Hamas, the Biden administration has sent hundreds of millions of dollars to the Palestinian Authority, much of which has found its way to Hamas and has been materialized in rockets raining down on Israel.

So is something bad going to happen?

Yes, because when you show weakness to our enemies, it encourages our enemies and they get more and more aggressive.

Where I differ with the Senator from Connecticut is I don't think the way to avoid something bad is to keep showing weakness and give Putin what he wants. The way to stand up to our enemies is to demonstrate strength, not weakness. I believe in peace through strength. I think appeasement invites conflict.

Because Joe Biden's multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin is a generational geopolitical mistake, because it strengthens Russia at the expense of America, and because it undermines U.S. national security interests, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, because every single day that the President doesn't have his team in place to protect this Nation, our Nation is under more serious threat.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 329, Mary Catherine Phee, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foun-

dation, for a term expiring September 27, 2026.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. I would note one of the efforts that the State Department has endeavored to do to try to force these nominations through is planning a whole series of articles in papers, which they somehow believe would pressure me. The most abusing of which was an article, I believe, in *POLITICO*, if I remember correctly, that began ominously: The mansions in Europe where our ambassadors reside are sadly empty due to this one Senator's objections.

I will confess, my heart is not broken that some rich Democratic donor is not wining and dining people in a grand ambassadorial mansion. I am sure that is an enormous crisis in Georgetown.

What I think is a crisis is making Putin stronger and Russia stronger and weakening Europe, weakening our allies, and weakening America.

And because Biden's multibillion-dollar gift to Putin weakened America, strengthened Russia, and undermined our U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS REQUEST CONSENT—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, because China is absolutely celebrating every single day that our Corps of diplomats is dramatically and dangerously understaffed because of these holds on the President's nominees, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 330, Mary Catherine Phee, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service to be a Member of the Board of Directors to the African Development Foundation, for a term expiring September 27, 2021.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object. I would note there is irony in the Senator from Connecticut expressing deep concern about China just an hour or 2 after this Chamber voted on an amendment I introduced that said we should not be importing electric vehicles that were made in China using slave labor in concentration camps. The Senator from Connecticut and every single Democratic Senator, save one, voted to reject that amendment.

The consequence is that the Biden administration is preparing to import millions of dollars of electric vehicles that were built—or parts of them were built—using slave labor in concentration camps in China.

You want to talk about what is encouraging and empowering the Chinese Communist regime?

It is the willingness of the Democratic Party to overlook their murder, torture in concentration camps because of their commitment to the Green New Deal.

Because Joe Biden giving a multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin strengthens Russia at the expense of America and it undermines U.S. national security interests, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, similarly, because without an ability to have U.S. diplomats on posts, to have our most important leadership positions staffed, we make ourselves intentionally, deliberately unable to be able to manage crises across the world.

I would ask that it be in order to make the same requests with respect to Executive Calendar No. 331, Mary Catherine Phee, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service to be Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object. Because Joe Biden's multibillion-dollar gift of this pipeline in defiance of U.S. law and contravention of the overwhelming bipartisan consensus of Congress, because it strengthens Russia at the expense of America and it undermines U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I would ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 332, Lee Satterfield, to be an Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object, because Joe Biden's multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin is a generational geopolitical mistake that strengthens Russia at the expense of America and undermines U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I would ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 333, Karen Erika Donfried, to be an Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs and Eurasian Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because Joe Biden's multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin is a generational geopolitical mistake, because it strengthens Russia at the expense of America, and it undermines U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 334, Jessica Lewis, to be an Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because Joe Biden's multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin is a generational geopolitical mistake, because it strengthens Russia at the expense of America, and it undermines U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 335, Donald Lu, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, to be Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because Joe Biden's multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin is a generational geopolitical mistake, because it strengthens Russia at the expense of America, and it undermines U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 336, Paloma Adams-Allen, to be a Deputy Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because Joe Biden's multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin is a generational geopolitical mistake, because it strengthens Russia at the expense of America, and it undermines U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 337, Isobel Coleman, to be a Deputy Administrator of the United

States Agency for International Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, because Joe Biden's multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin is a generational geopolitical mistake, because it strengthens Russia at the expense of America, and it undermines U.S. national security, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am at the final unanimous consent request, and I will make it in a moment.

Just to note, as we are wrapping up here, this has taken a while, and this list of pending nominees is going to grow. It is going to get longer and longer. There are going to be more key posts that are going to go unfilled.

I understand Senator CRUZ's desire to use his power to hold these nominees in order to get a change in policy from this administration. I doubt that the administration, which has already set a clear direction and has executed an agreement with the Germans, is going to abide.

My worry, though, is that this won't be the end, that this is not going to be the last foreign policy decision that the Senator from Texas or other Republican Senators will disagree with, nor will it likely be the last decision that any high-profile Cabinet member makes that finds disagreement from my Republican colleagues.

And so I end where I began, which is to say that Senator CRUZ and I have a difference of opinion with respect to Nord Stream and the gravity of the moment that we find ourselves in. But this place just becomes unworkable if every single Senator holds up this many nominees over one particular policy disagreement.

This tactic will be utilized by Democrats when there is a Republican in the White House. It might not be me, because I find this objectionable, but it will be copied, and you will find the same thing happening to a Republican President and their administration grinding to a halt in whatever Department finds itself the object of this tactic.

So I continue to express this deep worry about what it means to not have individuals in place in Somalia overseeing the Western Hemisphere and to not have someone overseeing our counternarcotics operations, but this list will get longer and longer and longer, and the risk to American security will be greater.

Again, I will just suggest that the harm being done here to U.S. security is much greater than the benefit that the Senator believes will be gained through negotiation over these posts with the administration.

So, at the risk of inspiring another very long speech from the Senator from Texas, I make those remarks.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. President, I ask, finally, that it be in order to make the same request, as I have and Senator MENENDEZ has, with respect to Executive Calendar No. 150, Brett Holmgren to be an Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, you know, the Senator from Connecticut is correct in that, if a Senator were to halt a large number of nominations for an idiosyncratic concern, for a concern unique to that Senator that was not widely shared, that could constitute an abuse of power, and I am going to suggest some aspects of this situation that make it quite different and that, in a subsequent administration, if there were a comparable situation, would make these same levers appropriate.

No. 1, the Biden administration is defying three separate Federal laws: two different Nord Stream 2 sanctions, both of which I authored, along with Democratic Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN, both of which passed the Senate and the House and were signed into law, both of which enjoyed massive, near-unanimous bipartisan support. In addition to that is CAATSA—strong Russia sanctions that are mandatory, that are designed to force a President to sanction Russia even if they are reluctant to do so like Joe Biden is.

Right now, the administration is defying the law, and so the message that I have conveyed to the administration repeatedly is, follow the law. I am not asking for a change in the law; I am saying follow the law. That is No. 1, if you have an administration that is openly defying the law, but No. 2, that is openly defying an overwhelming bipartisan consensus of Congress.

This is not a narrow partisan issue. And I would note, after Joe Biden waived the sanctions on Nord Stream 2, in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I introduced an amendment to reverse his decision. Every single Senator but one on that committee voted in favor of my amendment. The Senator from Connecticut voted in favor of my amendment. The Senator from New Jersey voted in favor of my amendment.

The Biden administration is telling all of Congress, essentially: Jump in a lake. We don't care that every Democrat and virtually every Republican has a dramatically different assessment of this situation than they do.

Third is the national security magnitude of this issue. This was a major national security victory.

When I met with the Biden administration, with each of their successive national security officials, I said: Look, I understand the instinct of any new administration to say, "Whatever the old guys did must be wrong." I get that the Biden guys want to say,

“Whatever Trump did must be wrong.” And by the way, the Trump guys, by and large, said, “Whatever Obama did must be wrong.” That is not a new thing. Whenever you have a change in an administration, that tends to be a default position. But what I urged them to do is, just because that is your knee-jerk instinct, this was a massive bipartisan victory for America, a national security victory that we won that Joe Biden is on the verge of throwing away.

The Secretary of State sat in my office and promised to fight to sanction Nord Stream 2. The Deputy Secretary of State sat in my office and promised to fight to sanction Nord Stream 2. The Under Secretary of State sat in my office and promised to fight to sanction Nord Stream 2. They did, in fact, fight to sanction Nord Stream 2, but unfortunately they were overruled by the White House, which made a political decision to give in to Putin.

In those circumstances, when you are defying explicit U.S. law, when you are defying the overwhelming bipartisan consensus of Congress, and when you are endangering U.S. national security and, indeed, turning a victory into a loss, I think it is appropriate to use the tools we have in front of us.

That being said, I have engaged in active negotiation with the Biden administration. In the past week, I have had conversations on this topic with the Secretary of the Treasury, with the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, with the National Security Advisor. I have had conversations with multiple Democratic Senators about a path forward.

But I will tell you what the path forward is not going to be. It is not going to be, let's roll over, give Putin his pipeline, and accept a massive national security loss for America. If that is where Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS want to go, they can go there, but they are not going to go there with my acquiescence, and I am going to use every tool I have as a Senator, elected by the people of Texas, to prevent that outcome.

Accordingly, because Joe Biden's decision to defy U.S. law; to defy the overwhelming bipartisan consensus of Congress; to surrender to Vladimir Putin; to give him his No. 1 priority—a multibillion-dollar pipeline that will provide billions of dollars of rewards for Russia for decades to come—because that decision is a generational geopolitical mistake on the order of magnitude of Jimmy Carter giving away the Panama Canal—that even 50 years later, the consequences of that geopolitical mistake still reverberate—50 years from now, Russian dictators will benefit from Joe Biden's weakness on Russia.

Because that strengthens Russia, because it empowers Russia to attack our enemies, to extort our enemies, to engage in economic blackmail against our enemies—our allies, rather—because our allies are begging us not to do this—I have met with senior offi-

cials of the Ukraine. The Ukrainians are begging us not to do this, and the Biden White House is threatening Ukraine: Keep your mouth shut because we have a political objective here.

Because that strengthens Russia at the expense of the United States, at the expense of Europe, at the expense of our allies, because it destroys jobs in America, and because it endangers U.S. national security, I emphatically object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I understand the Senator believes he has such a serious objection to administration policy that it merits this exceptional tactic. I would submit, as I move into closing business, that it is not the biggest disagreement that a Senator has had with an administration. It is not the biggest disagreement that a group of Senators has had with an administration. To believe that would be to elevate this dispute beyond its merits. That is not to suggest it isn't significant, but it is not the most significant disagreement that an individual Senator has ever had with an administration.

What is exceptional is his tactic. Never before has a U.S. Senator used their power in this way to hold up this many nominees at such a critical moment. That is what is exceptional. That is what makes this moment so dangerous. That is why Senator MENENDEZ and I came down to the floor to try to unlock some of these nominees toward confirmation, because it is the tactic, not the disagreement, that is the exception.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 268, 321, 189, 247, 267, 270, 344, 301, 295, 296, 297, 298, and 299; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the Record; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Jennifer Lester Moffitt, of California, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Marketing and Regulatory Programs; Kenneth Lee Salazar, of Colorado, to be Ambassador Extraordinary

and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Mexican States; Taryn Mackenzie Williams, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor; Alejandra Y. Castillo, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development; Andrew Eilperin Light, of Georgia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (International Affairs); Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr., of California, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; the following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601: to be General, Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson; Damon Y. Smith, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development; Evelyn M. Fujimoto, of Texas, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2022; Lori Peek, of Colorado, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2022; Kimberly L. Jones, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2023; William E. Holloway, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2021; and William E. Holloway, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2024 (Reappointment)?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

NATIONAL CATFISH MONTH

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of S. Res. 353, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 353) designating August 2021 as “National Catfish Month”.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.